

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

1. (Original) A rubber composition comprising:  
based on 100 parts by weight of diene rubber (A),  
2 to 20 parts by weight of short fiber (B) having an average fiber diameter of 10 to 100  $\mu\text{m}$  and average fiber length of 0.01 to 4 mm,  
1 to 10 parts by weight of particles (C) having a Moh's hardness of at least 5 and average particle size of at most 500  $\mu\text{m}$ , and  
1 to 15 parts by weight of a starch/plasticizer composite material (D).
2. (Original) The rubber composition of Claim 1, further comprising 4 to 12 % by weight of a silane coupling agent (E) based on the total weight of said starch/plasticizer composite material (D).
3. (Original) A pneumatic tire having a tread comprising the rubber composition of Claim 1.
4. (Original) A pneumatic tire having a tread comprising the rubber composition of Claim 2.
5. (New) The rubber composition of Claim 1, wherein the short fiber (B) has a Moh's hardness of 3 to 6.

6. (New) The rubber composition of Claim 1, wherein the short fiber (B) has a Moh's hardness of 4 to 5.

7. (New) The rubber composition of Claim 1, wherein the short fiber (B) has an average fiber length of 0.2 to 2 mm.

8. (New) The rubber composition of Claim 1, which comprises 2 to 20 parts by weight of the short fiber (B).

9. (New) The rubber composition of Claim 1, wherein the particles (C) have a Moh's hardness of 6 to 8.

10. (New) The rubber composition of Claim 1, wherein the particles (C) having an average particle size of 10 to 300  $\mu\text{m}$ .

11. (New) The rubber composition of Claim 1, which comprises 1 to 8 parts by weight of the particles (C).

12. (New) The rubber composition of Claim 1, further comprising 6 to 12 % by weight of a silane coupling agent (E) based on the total weight of said starch/plasticizer composite material (D).